

REMARKS

Claims 24-46 are currently pending in this application. Claims 24, 28, 31, 32, 33, 34, 40, 44, and 46 are amended. Claims 26, 27, 30, 35, and 36 are cancelled. No new matter is presented. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, Applicants request the consideration and allowance of claims 24, 25, 28, 29, 31-34, and 37-46.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner for indicating that claims 27, 32, 33, and 38 contain patentable subject matter. Claim 24 has been amended to include the allowable features recited in claim 27. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of all claims depending upon amended claim 24 be withdrawn and allowed.

Claims 28-31, 40, 44, and 45 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner indicates that claims 28, 30 and 40 recite features having insufficient antecedent basis. Claims 28, 31, 40, and 44 are amended to more clearly recite the features of the present invention. Claim 30 is cancelled. No new matter is presented. In view of the above amendments, Applicants request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 28-31, 40, 44, and 45 under 35 U.S.C. 112.

Claims 24-26, 34-37, 39, and 46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Mourou (U.S. Patent No. 5,656,186). The Examiner takes the position that Mourou teaches and/or suggests all the features recited in the rejected claims. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Mourou is directed to a method for laser induced breakdown of a material with a pulsed laser beam where the material is characterized by a relationship of fluency breakdown threshold versus laser beam pulse width that exhibits an abrupt, rapid and distinct change or at least a clearly detectable and distinct change in slope at a predetermined laser pulse width value. More specifically, Mourou discloses a method for generating a beam of laser pulses in which each pulse has a pulse width equal to or less than the predetermined laser pulse width value. The beam is focused to a point at or beneath the surface of a material where laser induced breakdown is desired.

Claim 24 is amended to recite the allowable subject matter of claim 27. Therefore, Applicants request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 24 and 25 under 35 U.S.C.

102(b).

Claim 34 is also amended to recite the features of claims 35 and 36. Mourou does not teach or suggest beam devices for beam shaping and/or beam control and/or beam deflection and/or beam focusing as recited in amended claim 34. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 34 recites subject matter that is neither taught nor suggested by Mourou. In view of this amendment, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 34.

Claims 37, 39, and 46 are dependent upon claim 34, therefore, it is submitted for at least the reasons mentioned above, claims 37, 39, and 46 recite patentable subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 37, 39, and 46 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

Claims 41-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mourou. The Examiner states that Mourou teaches and/or suggests all the features recited in claims 41-43. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Claims 41-43 are dependent upon amended independent claim 34. Therefore, it is submitted that for at least the reasons mentioned above, claims 41-43 recite subject matter that is neither taught nor suggested by the applied reference. Applicants request the withdrawal rejection of claims 41-43 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Based upon the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and its earlier allowance. Should the Examiner feel that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorney would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact him at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

Gerald Kiel

Reg. No. 25, 116

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REED SMITH LLP
599 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10022
GHK:BS